

The Voice

Rhonda Johnson, President

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TRCs stress teachers

A labor-saving method introduced to test students' reading progress is using a lot of class time.

Teachers told us that the Text Reading Comprehension (TRC) assessments, given by elementary teachers from their Palm Pilots, is proving for many difficult to use. The work often is delayed by inadequate training and a shortage of hand-held devices for special education teachers.



CEA and the administration reviewed the results of a member survey at their Jan. 12 Joint Labor-Management Committee meeting. CEA surveyed teachers at every elementary school, and more than 350 responded. Eighty-seven percent said they were behind schedule with their reading-pacing guides, and 49 percent responded that they had lost at least a week of instructional time.

"I am not behind because I skipped what I could not cover," wrote one respondent. "Testing is more important than teaching, it would seem."

Here are some additional results:

- Nearly half of the teachers answered they did not have the appropriate materials to administer the test.
- Division 2 teachers were most often under supplied.
- Special education teachers said they borrowed Palm Pilots because they did not receive their own devices.
- More than two-thirds of teachers said it took 16–20 minutes to test each student. One teacher wrote that it took two weeks to test 25 students.
- Teachers are lagging behind on requirements of the curriculum guide.
- Nearly two-thirds of teachers said their students were unable to work independently during testing of each child and needed "busy work" to keep them occupied.
- Fewer than half of teachers modified their instruction based on the results of the TRCs.
- Teachers who responded that they were effectively trained and had the necessary materials and equipment were three times more likely to modify their instruction based on TRC results.
- Teachers who were effectively trained reported better availability of testing materials, shorter delays in following the curriculum guide and fewer challenges keeping students on track.

"If the administration wants teachers to use data to drive their instruction, then they need to use our data to address the problems they have created," said CEA President Rhonda Johnson. "The results of this survey underscore the importance of working with CEA before implementing something of this enormity—instead of just imposing it on teachers, which is what they have done."

Fraud alert

The text below is based on information CEA had at the time *The Voice* went to press.

On Monday, Jan. 12, Columbus Police fraud detectives notified CCS officials that a list of employees and social security numbers were found in a house during a police raid. It appears that the affected employees, including teachers, are clients of the following annuity companies: Allianz Life, Nationwide, Ohio Deferred Compensation, Northern Life/Midwest Life, American Capital/ Primerica, VALIC, NEA Valuebuilders, R. F. Disbursements, Putnam Investors Services, Great American Life, ING-Reliastar, Plan Member Services, ING-457 & Roth 403(b) and Life Insurance of the Southwest.

The administration is the process of notifying every one of these employees and is doing everything possible to help protect their identities and their private information. In addition, the administration will be purchasing credit monitoring services for each of them. CEA suggests that if you are offered credit monitoring services, you should take part.

CCS has also begun investigating how this incident could have occurred. Even though there is no evidence the CCS electronic data systems have been compromised in any way, the district is reviewing all systems and procedures with respect to this issue. In addition to the police investigation, the district intends to engage the services of forensic accountants to examine these systems and procedures.

The individuals who were in possession of the lists are not CCS employees; and, at this time, there appears to be no connection between the perpetrators and the district.

CCS will continue to work closely with Columbus Police detectives, and the district will keep employees advised of any new information. Please contact CEA if you have questions.

Duck hunting season?

Everyone knows there is no specific dress code for teachers. We expect our teachers to dress professionally, but they don't have to make any special fashion statement.

One principal decided this isn't good enough. Apparently aiming for a spread in *Field and Stream*, this administrator at one of our elementary schools in the Rosewind community made teachers wear bright orange vests (the type worn by hunters) during their field trip to the Ohio Theatre.

His reason? He wanted parents to know who the teachers were.

Our take? Either he's making a statement about teachers' vulnerability in the public arena, or he doesn't know his own staff members.

The solution: Let's make him a target, give him a vest and then lecture him on teacher rights.



Don't volunteer your rights away

Sometimes administrators ask teachers to do things outside of the collective bargaining agreement. There is nothing wrong with volunteering, but consider this: When you routinely take on extra duties, you make it difficult for your peers to refuse. What one teacher does affects everyone else.

So if you believe your building principal is expecting you to work outside the contract—what we call an “inferred directive”—don't be insubordinate, but do call CEA so we can intervene on your behalf. We will try to work it out, or we will file a grievance or unfair labor practice.

Remember, rights that you forfeit could ultimately end up on the bargaining table and become permanent changes to the *CEA Master Agreement*. Don't feel pressured. Realize that your building administrator should know what is required of teachers and should abide by it. *The Agreement* is crafted and approved by the Board, the administration and the CEA. For more information, call CEA.

PAR Pool

Eligible teachers may now apply to be consulting teachers in the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program. Applications are due by Friday, Jan. 23, at 4:30 p.m.

A member must have:

- Five years of successful CCS teaching experience
- Knowledge of classroom management and instruction techniques
- Excellent written and oral communication and leadership skills
- Ability to work effectively with colleagues

Applications must include:

- A letter of interest and a résumé
- Reference letters from your principal/supervisor, your Senior Faculty Representative (or district governor) and two teachers from your building/program

Send applications to Mira Wright, Director of Human Resources Administration, at the CEC.

Applicants will be notified by Friday, Feb. 6, if they have been selected for interviews.

View the PAR Consulting Teacher job description at www.ceaohio.org/GD/Templates/Pages/cea/ceaPrimary.aspx?page=2&TopicRelationID=207 or on the Human Resources section of the CCS Intranet.

OEA Board positions open

Two positions are open on the OEA Board of Directors: Capital District 1 and an unexpired term for Capital District 2. The OEA Board is the governing body for the representative assembly, establishing procedures, selecting top administrative employees, setting assembly dates and calling other meetings as necessary. Board members meet regularly with local association councils.

The Capital 1 term is Sept. 1, 2009–Aug. 31, 2012. The Capital 2 term for Capital 2 is Apr. 30, 2009–Aug. 31, 2011. The deadline for declaring candidacy is Monday, Feb. 9.

You may request a nomination form by calling the CEA office at 253-4731. The election will take place at the Capital RA on Thursday, Apr. 30. The nomination forms should be sent to Becky Slaughter, Manager of Governance Relations, P.O. Box 2550, Columbus, OH 43216. Fax copies will not be accepted.

CEA Elections

We are entertaining declarations for candidates for delegates to the NEA and the OEA Representative Assemblies

and for District Governors.

It's a great way to serve your fellow educators in a number of capacities, including at the fall and spring OEA Assemblies. NEA delegates will travel to San Diego July 1–6.

The following positions are open in the Columbus Education Association Spring 2009 elections:

- Governors for Districts 3 and 6
- High School Governor-at-Large
- NEA delegates to the 2009 Representative Assembly
- OEA delegates to the 2009–2010 Representative Assemblies

Members may declare their candidacy for these positions until Jan. 30. Candidates may campaign from Feb. 2–13. Voting will take place in all buildings/units from Feb. 17–Mar. 2. The Elections Committee will tabulate votes on Mar. 3.

Is your family protected?

Since 1987, NEA has provided a free life insurance policy for each and every person who holds an active membership in the Association in the form of the NEA Complimentary Term Life Insurance Plan (formerly known as NEA Dues Tab). Sadly, only about 52 percent of all eligible members have taken the time to designate their beneficiary, complicating the process of paying any benefit to the families of members who die. This is further exacerbated by some who have out-of-date beneficiaries, perhaps an ex-spouse or a person who is no longer living.

Why not start out this new year by contacting NEA Member Benefits about the NEA Complimentary Term Life Insurance Plan already in place for active members and registering or updating your beneficiary? You do not even need to know if you ever registered before or who that designation might have been; simply register and the most recent designation is the one that will count.

It is as easy as a phone call or a visit to the Web site. The NEA Member Benefits Member Service Center can be reached at 800-637-4636, Monday–Friday from 8 a.m.–8 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. One of the helpful representatives can assist with this fast process of designating your beneficiary. Or, if you prefer, you can register online at www.neamb.com. Select NEA COMPLIMENTARY TERM LIFE INSURANCE from the drop down menu which will appear when the cursor is on the INSURANCE button at the top left side of the page. From there, select the CHANGE MY BENEFICIARY button, and a few easy steps allow you to complete the process.

Special notes

- ❑ The **David and Joanne Katonak Arts Enrichment Fund** is a newly established **grant opportunity** for all Columbus City Schools **arts teachers**. Applicants may apply for **up to \$750** to enhance student experiences in the arts. Applications must be submitted by Feb. 6. If you have questions, please contact Linda Wright (365-5024) or John Farley (365-8733). For applications, contact Betty Warnock at 365-8733 or e-mail bwarnock@columbus.k12.oh.us.
- ❑ **CEA and NEA Member Benefits** business partners are sponsoring a **free workshop, 23 Financial Mistakes You Can't Afford to Make**. Join us **Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 4:15 p.m.** at the **CEA office, 929 E. Broad St.** You will hear about mistakes commonly made when considering home financing, life insurance, retirement plans, high-debt interest, tax returns and auto purchasing. Call Ezzetta Murray at 253-4731 to register. Refreshments will be provided.
- ❑ We apologize for misspelling the name of National Board Certified Teacher Sandra Browne in last week's *Voice*.